



Maine State Police Crime Laboratory

Training and Tuition Reimbursement

1. Scope

The Maine State Police Crime Laboratory is committed to providing training to new employees in addition to providing continual training to existing employees. This training may come in a variety of forms to include in-house training programs, external trainings, on-line trainings, etc.

2. Responsibilities

2.1 Section Supervisor

- 2.1.1 Section Supervisors are responsible for conducting laboratory orientation training for new employees.
- 2.1.2 Section Supervisors are responsible for ensuring training within their laboratory sections is completed and have the responsibility of ensuring the preparation of an employee for the performance of their duties.
- 2.1.3 Section Supervisors will monitor employee performance and provide leadership that will update and increase the employee's skills.
- 2.1.4 Section Supervisors must ensure that employees stay abreast of developments within their specialty area by reading current scientific literature and by attending seminars, courses, and professional meetings or documented training sessions/classes in relevant subject areas at least once a year as finances permit.
- 2.1.5 The Section Supervisor must ensure that each employee completes all training as required by the laboratory and section training programs.

2.2 Laboratory Employees

- 2.2.1 Laboratory employees must complete the training necessary to meet the requirements of their position, which includes:
 - Completing the Laboratory Orientation Training Program and Checklist
 - Completing the training requirements for their position
 - Continuing professional development through workshops, seminars and professional memberships as finances permit
 - Ensuring their completed training forms are turned over to their supervisor
- 2.2.2 Laboratory employees may request training at any time.
- 2.2.3 The employee is responsible for maintaining a copy of their Curriculum Vitae in Paradigm. This copy should be updated at least once a year.



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2.3 Laboratory Training Officer

2.3.1 The Training Officer is responsible for coordinating new employee orientation(s), training, in-service lab familiarization, safety training, and courtroom training.

2.3.2 The Training Officer will assist Section Supervisors in supporting employee development.

2.3.3 The Training Officer is responsible for maintaining employee records for completed training seminars/conferences, job-related courses, and lectures/presentations.

2.3.4 The Laboratory Sergeant is the Training Officer.

3. New Employee Orientation

3.1 New laboratory employees will receive orientation training related to the Department of Public Safety. The Department of Public Safety Personnel Department will coordinate with the Laboratory Sergeant to provide the new employee orientation program. Various personnel forms will also be completed at this time (e.g. insurance, tax, etc.).

3.2 The Section Supervisor will coordinate with the Training Officer to follow the Laboratory Orientation Training Program and Checklist for the new employee. This training will include:

3.2.1 The employee will be given a general laboratory overview, tour and introductions.

3.2.2 The employee will be given information about special workplace conditions and location of supplies and equipment.

3.2.3 The employee will be shown where the critical safety items are located, which includes fire extinguishers, safety showers, eyewash stations, first aid kit, etc.

3.2.4 The employee will be provided right-to-know and Hepatitis Vaccination training. Hepatitis Vaccinations will be scheduled for the employee or the employee will be asked to sign a declination form if the employee declines the vaccinations.

3.2.5 The employee will be trained on laboratory security policies which will include receiving applicable keys and security card. The security card will be received from the Bureau of General Services. This will be coordinated with the Director, Security Officer, and BGS.

3.2.6 The laboratory will provide an identification card for the employee.



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- 3.2.7 The employee will be introduced to the laboratory chain of command and overall department and bureau chain of command.
- 3.2.8 The employee will be given training on the legal aspects of forensic science, which will also include observation of seasoned scientists testifying in court proceedings. Valuable information is garnered by observing scientists from all disciplines testify and this is encouraged.
- 3.2.9 The employee will be introduced to laboratory capabilities, which will include time spent in each section to become familiar with section capabilities, analysis techniques, and evidence packaging needs. This will include time spent with Evidence Receiving.
- 3.2.10 The employee will be required to complete training on Ethics in Forensic Science prior to conducting independent examinations on evidence.
- 3.2.11 The completed Laboratory Orientation Training Program and Checklist will be uploaded in Paradigm.

4. Training to Meet Position Requirements

- 4.1 Each employee will be trained to perform duties required by their job description and develop a general knowledge of laboratory capabilities. Upon initial employment each employee will start a training program unique to his or her specialty and to general laboratory functions.
- 4.2 Each Section Supervisor is responsible for maintaining training programs for new employees. These programs may be adjusted to meet the experience level of the new employee.
- 4.3 Each Section will maintain a training manual or series of training manuals for each relevant discipline or sub-discipline.
- 4.3 Each employee will complete the training program appropriate for the specialty area(s) in which casework is conducted. This training program will be monitored by the supervisor.
- 4.4 Each employee must be acquainted with the methods that are generally accepted in the discipline.



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- 4.5 The Employee will be certified to perform independent forensic casework upon meeting these criteria:
 - 4.5.1 Completion of training program determined by the Section Supervisor.
 - 4.5.1.1 If the trainee is anticipated to testify, the training program must include a segment on presentation of evidence in court and a mock trial or mock testimony.
 - 4.5.2 Successful completion of a competency test (not to be confused with proficiency testing).
 - 4.5.2.1 Competency testing should include evaluation of knowledge of existing literature.
 - 4.5.2.2 Competency testing must include the examination of sufficient unknown materials to cover the types of samples expected to be encountered during normal casework duties.
 - 4.5.2.3 The competency test will either be a written examination, a practical examination, an oral examination, or a combination.
 - 4.5.3 Completion of a period of supervised casework determined by the Section Supervisor.
 - 4.5.4 Successful completion of a proficiency test.
 - 4.5.5 Successful completion of a mock trial.
 - 4.5.5.1 The Section Supervisor and one member of laboratory management (Lab Director or Quality Manager) shall be in attendance.
 - 4.5.5.2 The trainee's performance will be recorded on the Mock Trial Evaluation Form by the Section Supervisor. The form will be reviewed and signed by the trainee, Section Supervisor and Director/Quality Manager.
 - 4.5.5.3 If the trainee's performance is unsatisfactory, the Section Supervisor will determine if additional training is needed. An additional mock trial will be performed after successful completion of the training.



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- 4.5.5.4 The trainee will be allowed a total of two attempts to achieve successful completion of a mock trial.
- 4.5.5.5 A trainee may be exempt from completing the mock trial if they can show successful completion of a mock trial as part of an external training program or if they have previously testified as an expert witness in their discipline(s). The exemption must be approved by the Section Supervisor and the Director/Quality Manager.
- 4.5.5.6 Additional requirements for a mock trial will be addressed in the section-specific training manuals.
- 4.5.6 Provide proof of education as required.
 - 4.5.6.1 Examiners working in Forensic Chemistry shall possess a baccalaureate or an advanced degree in a natural science or a closely related field.
 - 4.5.6.2 Examiners performing DNA analysis shall possess a baccalaureate or an advanced degree in a natural science or a closely related field and shall meet the education requirements of the *Quality Assurance Standards for Forensic DNA Testing Laboratories* and *Quality Assurance Standards for DNA Databasing Laboratories*.
 - 4.5.6.3 Examiners working in Latent Prints and Firearms will meet the experience and educational requirements specified in their job descriptions.
 - 4.5.6.4 Technicians will meet the experience and education requirements specified in their job descriptions.
- 4.6 Upon meeting these criteria, the Certification for Independent Casework form will be completed in Paradigm and electronically signed by the Section Supervisor, technical manager or training coordinator (if different from the Section Supervisor), and Director.
 - 4.6.1 As part of the Certification for Independent Casework documentation, the trainee will be asked to provide an evaluation of the training program. The evaluation will be available to the Section Supervisor and the Director.
- 4.7 The employee may begin independent casework and performing technical reviews in the relevant discipline / sub-discipline once the Director has approved the Certification for Independent Casework form.



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- 4.8 Certification for Independent Casework authorizes that the employee can perform the following in the relevant discipline/sub-discipline:
- Development, modification, verification and validation of methods
 - Operate applicable equipment
 - Analysis of results, including opinions and interpretations
 - Report, review and authorization of results

5. **Retraining**

- 5.1 Situations may occur where an employee requires additional training. These include extended absences, repeated instances of difficulty performing routine tasks, overall technical difficulties, policy violations, etc.

5.1.1 If an employee has had an extended absence (>1 year) from the technical discipline and no major procedural changes have occurred, a basic refresher training is warranted.

5.1.2 Remedial training is warranted if an employee is having difficulty grasping technical concepts, technical errors, policy violations, extended absence with procedural changes, etc.

- 5.2 Retraining can take the form of discussions, additional readings, observation of laboratory work, outside trainings, etc. The supervisor will be responsible for devising appropriate training and evaluation.

5.2.1 The supervisor will be responsible for providing the employee with a written outline of the anticipated training, schedule, and expected outcomes which will include the evaluation methods.

- 5.3 The supervisor will determine if additional competency and / or proficiency testing is necessary.

- 5.4 Retraining will be documented by the responsible supervisor via a Documentation of Specialty Training form.

5.4.1 As part of the Documentation of Specialty Training documentation, the trainee will be asked to provide an evaluation of the training program. The evaluation will be available to the Section Supervisor and the Director.

6. **Employee Development**

- 6.1 Each employee at the Crime Laboratory will be encouraged to continue his or her professional development. The Section Supervisor will meet with each employee at least



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annually to discuss the employee's current training and development needs, career goals, and job satisfaction.

- 6.2 Employees are encouraged to attend at least one regional, national, or international professional meeting, conference or training yearly, provided monetary resources permit.
- 6.3 All employees are encouraged to join and participate in professional organizations, to give seminars and talks to professional groups, and to train others in our laboratory.
- 6.4 Section Supervisors will review requests for training and for attending conferences and recommend their approval, if appropriate.
- 6.5 Employees who attend training may be required by their Supervisor to present a training session for their section after completion of the training.
- 6.6 Upon completion of attendance at a training seminar/conference or job-related course, each employee will provide a copy of the Certificate of Attendance and/or any other documentation of attendance to the Training Officer.
 - 6.6.1 When the employee submits the training documentation, the employee will be asked to provide an evaluation of the training program. The evaluation will be available to the Section Supervisor and the Training Officer.
- 6.7 Employees will review appropriate professional journals, reference books, and trade manuals. Literature reviews will be documented either by the employee or by the Section Supervisor, as determined by the Section Supervisor.
- 6.8 Each section will maintain a library of relevant journals and texts.
- 6.9 Employees are encouraged to join and participate in appropriate professional organizations.
 - 6.9.1 Financial assistance will be available for any membership that is required as a condition of employment. Prior approval must be granted from the employee's Supervisor and the Laboratory Director.
 - 6.9.2 Financial assistance for non-required memberships may be granted if funds permit. Prior approval must be granted from the employee's Supervisor and the Laboratory Director.



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- 6.9.3 New requests for professional memberships will be reviewed by the employee's Supervisor and approved by the Director.
- 6.9.4 When appropriate, time will be given to employees to attend meetings, serve as officers, and participate as members of special committees and boards of professional organizations.
- 6.10 The Training Officer is available to aid and assist in the formation of individual development plans.
- 6.11 The Documentation of Specialty Area Training form in Paradigm is to be used when new techniques or instrumentation are added to a discipline where a scientist is already performing independent casework. The form may also be used to document other levels of training, such as competency testing.
- 7. **Requests for Training**
- 7.1 The state policies on out-of-state training and travel advances routinely change. Refer to your supervisor for the most up-to-date information on the required paperwork.
- 7.2 A "Request for Out of State Travel and / or Travel Advance" form must be completed in the following situations:
 - 7.2.1 Any travel out of state whether or not the travel requires funding
 - 7.2.2 Any travel or training that requires funding
- 7.3 Any travel request that requires airfare must include a completed state "Air Travel Quotation" form.
- 7.4 The travel / training request packet must contain the following information:
 - 7.4.1 A synopsis of the training requested which may include the brochure or information from the group providing the training.
 - 7.4.2 The registration form, where applicable.
 - 7.4.3 A copy of the per diem rates for the location the employee is traveling to.
 - 7.4.4 A copy of the pro rata breakdown of the per diem to include the first and last day of travel.



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- 7.5 Upon return from the travel or training, the employee must complete the state's "Expense Voucher" whether or not expenses were incurred. This form must be completed within 15 days of returning to work.
- 8. Tuition Reimbursement**
- 8.1 The laboratory may provide tuition reimbursement to employees, when funds are available.
- 8.2 The reimbursement will include all course related fees and required costs.
- 8.3 The course must be in the employee's field or reasonably related to their work which will help improve their skills and improve the services provided.
- 8.4 All courses should be taken after hours and on the employee's own time.
- 8.4.1 If a course is not available during off-hours, the employee may request to go on a flexible schedule for the duration of the course.
- 8.5 All tuition reimbursement requests must be submitted 30 days prior to taking the course.
- 8.6 Any employee seeking tuition reimbursement must submit a memo to the director, through their supervisor, requesting reimbursement. The memo must include the following:
- 8.6.1 The institution
- 8.6.2 The course title and description, to include the objective of the course and the number of credit hours
- 8.6.3 Whether the course is required as part of a degree program or is an elective
- 8.6.4 The dates and times of the course
- 8.6.5 If the employee is requesting a flexible schedule and an outline of the proposed work schedule
- 8.6.6 The impact this course would have on the laboratory and operations
- 8.6.7 An explanation of how the course is related to the employee's work here and how it can improve their performance



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- 8.6.8 The employee's goal in taking the course, e.g. attaining a Master's degree
- 8.6.9 The cost per credit hour and the total cost of taking the course
- 8.7 The Section Supervisor should review the memo and may provide comments on the memo; however the Director has the final authority.
- 8.8 The Director will determine if funds are available and if the request otherwise meets all of the criteria. The Director will then approve or deny the tuition reimbursement request.
- 8.9 If the tuition reimbursement is approved, then the employee must provide proof of successful completion of the course within 45 days of the end of the course. Successful completion is defined as a C or better for undergraduate coursework and a B or better for graduate coursework.
- 8.10 Upon receipt of proof of successful completion, the Director will authorize payment for reimbursement.